MODES OF DIMINISHING INTEMPERANCE.

ISSUED BY THE HOWARD ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN*—1876.

[Early copies of the following paper were sent to several Church dignitaries an other Ministers of Religion, from whom replies were received encouraging its diffusion. The ARCBISHOP OF CANTERBURY stated that he had read it "with great interest." The BISHOP OF LONDON wrote—"The paper on the Modes of Diminishing Intemperance is very interesting, and makes suggestions well deserving consideration." The DEAN OF WESTMINSTER also expressed his approval, and authorised the use of his name accordingly.]

THE preeminently "vexed" question of the day is—"HOW TO DIMINISH THE CRIME AND MISERY CAUSED BY INTEMPERANCE?" To this end, numbers of good men have long been labouring; yet they themselves are constrained to admit tha the evil outgrows their efforts. For instance, the "United Kingdom Alliance" (a boy of marvellous energy, and with a revenue of £20,000 per annum) have, after a quarter of a century's operations, recently issued a declaration, that in spite of all endeavours "Intemperance, crime, pauperism, insanity and brutality are more rampant than ever." This is perhaps too sweeping a statement, as not sufficiently recognizing the sobriety of a large proportion of the people, after all. Yet it is shown by statistics that, whereas the population of the country has increased about 50 per cent. since 1830, the number of drinkng licences has increased 300 per cent. And the electoral and Parliamentary power of the Liquor Traffic is greater than ever. Earnest Total Abstinence advocates have meanwhile been urging their countrymen to "go to the root of the matter," and become *total* abstainers from intoxicants, inasmuch as, in their view, there is no other safe or justifiable course, however moderate. Yet prisons and poor houses, asylums and hospitals, are still filled in great degree by the victims of intemperance. And *the broken limbs and maimed bodies of thousands of weak women and little children* annually prove the necessity for a more effectual prevention of drunken brutality. A leading article in the *Times* confesses, as to this question, that "*What is to be done? is the wild despairing cry heard on every side.*"

It is therefore very timely and useful to consider whether the repression of this great evil will not be more rapidly, as well as more effectually, attained, by a practical recognition of the truth conveyed in the wise saying of one of the most ancient writers of Greece (Hesiod), "*The half is more than the whole.*" For, paradoxical as this saying appears, it is often eminently true of political progress. Public opinion is produced and set in operation very slowly. To urge it too rapidly to adopt sweeping changes involves disappointment and *reaction;* just as the attempt to fill narrow-mouthed jars, by deluging them with buckets of water, results merely in the waste of most of the liquid and the hindrance of the desired object, whereas gradual advances, in accordance with the readiness of public opinion to support them, are at once more easy of attainment, more secure when reached, and more widely beneficent by their general voluntary acceptance.

There are several means, involving comparatively little innovation upon existing arrangements, which, it is likely, would be followed by a considerable improvement on the present state of things, and might comparatively soon be attained, if the friends

* The HOWARD ASSOCIATION was instituted (under the patronage of the late LORD BROUGHAM) *for the promotion of the best methods of Penal Treatment and Crime Prevention.* It labours to indoctrinate the public mind with the importance of a *reformatory* and radically *preventive* treatment.—Secretary, WILLIAM TALLACK; Office, 5, Bishopsgate-street Without, London, E.C.

of temperance would concentrate their efforts upon the attempt in such a manner as to encourage the general co-operation of thoughtful public opinion.

I. Without even changing the existing body of Licensing Magistrates, it would be very advantageous to select, FROM THE PRESENT LISTS, Committees of not more than three Justices for each Division of every County, to whom should be absolutely committed the granting and control of all Licenses in the District, without any appeal to the Quarter Sessions and without any collateral grants of Licenses by the Excise. The responsibility being thus concentrated on SMALL AND WELL KNOWN COMMITTEES, personally conversant with local needs, and in considerable degree amenable to local opinion, there would be a decided advance upon the present mode of giving Licenses and of allowing appeals to distant authorities who are often total strangers to the circumstances of particular sub-districts.

II. MAGISTRATES' CLERKS, in many cases, now derive fees on the granting of Licenses, and also on each renewal. They are a useful and honourable class of public servants and deserve better remuneration than they receive. But it is to be regretted that it continues to be their direct *personal interest* to increase Licenses, and to exert their personal influence in their support. This mode of remuneration should, therefore, (and on other grounds also) be substituted by fixed salaries in all cases.

III. The treatment of HABITUAL DRUNKEN OFFENDERS requires alteration, so that they may not continue to be sentenced to a useless succession of 5s. fines, or of seven days' imprisonments, almost *ad infinitum*, but, after several offences, be detained long enough to form sober *habits*, or otherwise only left at liberty on satisfactory *neighbour's bail*, for good conduct, being offered. (POLICE COURT MISSIONARIES, to visit such prisoners before and after their liberation, have effected much good in Birmingham.)

IV. The example of the great success of THE LUTON MAGISTRATES in wonderfully diminishing local crime by means of resolutely carrying out the provisions of the "PREVENTION OF CRIME ACT," as applicable to low public houses harbouring disorderly characters, shows how much might be similarly effected in other districts if combined popular opinion were (as in that town) brought to bear upon the Magistrates and the police.

V. Yet in various larger places, Liverpool for instance, the Liquor Traffic influence can so far control the Magistracy and the police, as to secure a general laxity of supervision. Hence the appointment of INDEPENDENT INSPECTORS, by the Government, to act as general supervisors (similar to Inspectors of Factories), and to report to the Central Government on local Magisterial or Police laxity, would be a further check on existing evils without involving any startling change of current arrangements. But at present it is a curious circumstance that the effect of diminishing Licenses has, in a number of localities, been followed by additional drunkenness, inasmuch as the increased value of the public house property, previously licensed, has rendered the Magistrates less willing to sanction the heavier penalties on the publicans involved by a rigid carrying out of legal supervision. INDEPENDENT INSPECTORS, *in no way responsible to the local authorities*, but only to the *Central* Government, would be able to stimulate a more strict oversight.

VI. To prevent intemperance on the Sunday, the sale of drink on that day should be prohibited. A wise and active philanthropist writes to the Howard Association on this point, "Observation of many years has made me believe that no single step is likely to effect so much good." But in case the public are not prepared for so decided a course, the sale might reasonably be confined to a smaller number of houses than during the

week. This might be effected by issuing SPECIAL SUNDAY LICENSES at a considerable EXTRA CHARGE. And even if publicans are willing to pay such extra charge, only a certain proportion should be thus permitted to open on that day.

VII. Music and Dancing Halls should not be permitted DOUBLE LICENSES, for *both* dancing and the sale of drink.*

VIII. But, when all has been done that intelligent public opinion is ever likely to sanction in the way of legal restrictions and licensing conditions, the principal work will *still* be to influence the personal convictions and habits of the people themselves, as *voluntary* agents. And this can only be effected, as hitherto, by MORAL AND RELIGIOUS OPERATIONS, concurrently (it is important to remember) with an increase of such necessary facilities of sobriety, as HEALTHY DWELLINGS, † PROVIDENT HABITS, INNOCENT RECREATIONS, WORKMEN'S CLUBS, EDUCATIONAL ELEVATION,‡ and a cheap and ever ready supply of HARMLESS BEVERAGES. §

As to HEALTHY DWELLINGS, the useful legislation inaugurated by Mr. CROSS, as Home Secretary, will, it is to be hoped, lead to great improvements in our chief cities. For the nauseous condition of undrained, ill-ventilated, sunless dens, almost perforce drives their wretched inhabitants to the solace of drink, and thus further brutalizes them.

Another source of drunkenness, to which very little attention has been hitherto given, is THE ALMOST ENFORCED IMPROVIDENCE of large sections of the people. In the first place the Poor Law gives no advantage to the thrifty and industrious person, over the profligate and the reckless, when either applies for relief. And, secondly, the Legislature has, as yet, failed to furnish the poorer classes with effectual protection against being victimised by wholesale fraud, or gross mismanagement, on the part of many Clubs and "Benefit Societies," so-called, numbers of which are started chiefly to benefit public houses. There are more than 20,000 Benefit societies (registered and unregistered) in the Kingdom, many of which are hopelessly insolvent, and some of which spend on office management more than 10*s.* in the £. Some persons speak of "the improvidence of the working classes." But it is marvellous that they have saved so largely as they have, when the vast amount of their deposits in clubs (rotten or otherwise) is considered. Poor people have laboriously saved millions, much of which either has been lost, or will be lost. The

* In the case of a recent fatality, following a visit to a Music Hall, it was stated that the party had been granted free admission on its being pleaded: "Let them in; they'll drink like devils!"

† There are multitudes who are almost irresistibly tempted to drunkenness by their circumstances in life, or because they have no comfort but in the warm and cheerful public-house. Such are many of the poor who dwell in wretched cellars below the streets; or the thousands of lads who flock into cities from the country, and have no friends, no sitting room, no resting place except a hired bed at night. And there are many sailors surrounded, when on land, by crowded gin-shops and brothels clustering round their "Homes," as at Liverpool, where the Rev. J. Nugent says he counted "five public-houses in six contiguous houses."

‡ Intellectual education will avail little against excessive temptations. The following striking testimony was lately given before a committee of Liverpool Magistrates, by Rev. John Jones.—"I have had an opportunity of paying a visit to a very educated city in Sweden—GOTHENBURG. There were 11,000 children in the city, every one of whom was at school, and it has been for a very long period the universal practice in Sweden to educate every child. I found that in that city, which has a population of 60,000, with all this education, there were more commitments for drunkenness, in a year, ~~than in the~~ City of Edinburgh with 200,000 inhabitants—a sufficient proof that education is not the panacea which some think it will be. I am satisfied that the remedy lies mainly in the removal of the temptation." (An improvement has, however, taken place at Gothenburg, by imposing some special limits on the sale of drink.)

§ The Birmingham locomotive Coffee stalls supply a good hot beverage at a half-penny per cup, in the streets, and return their projectors a profit of from 12 to 15 per cent. Those efforts to promote temperance, which are thus so planned as to be commercially self-supporting and profitable, are also the most efficient—morally and socially.

bitter disappointment and misery thus caused, by wholesale, it is impossible to estimate. Hence there is a natural tendency to conclude: "If we save in these societies, they often burst up and swallow our earnings. We will make sure of our money henceforth by enjoying it in eating and drinking. For in the end, the parish is bound to keep us." This is a most important source of drunkenness. And so it will continue until Mr. GLADSTONE'S grand national boon, the POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK system, is *extended* to facilities for a secure GOVERNMENT CLUB, everywhere applicable to the relief of Sickness, Old Age, Infirmity, and Accidents. For provident people are generally temperate people, as in the case of the French and Dutch.

But RELIGIOUS MOTIVES AND TRAINING will always be the *chief* and supreme power of God against Intemperance, as against other evils. An experienced prison chaplain remarks that "Drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking and profligate companions are but *secondary* causes of crime. The source of *these* and of their consequences is THE NEGLECT OF RELIGIOUS TRAINING. Criminals are not brought up in '*the way* in which they should go.'" In proof of this, he mentions that out of 1,224 prisoners whom he had examined, 674, more than half, could read fairly, but *only six* possessed a good knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. The training thus needed implies, in particular, the early formation, by parents, of the *habit of prayer* and of the fear of God, in their offspring.*

As God is honoured by a *main* reliance upon Him and His Gospel, for the means of checking this evil, He will bless such efforts. Numbers will recognize the claims of Christ's love upon them as an obligation to temperance, in the sense of abstinence from *drunkenness*, when those claims are perseveringly plied and not extended to merely *technical* interpretations of the word "temperance." The CHRISTIAN CHURCH, by its manifold organisations of Ministers and Evangelists, City Missionaries, Bible Women, and District Visitors, is, and ever must be, the *greatest* of all agencies for promoting Temperance and many other social reforms—even when not directly aiming thereat. And notwithstanding much shortcoming in these respects, so considerable a measure of success has attended the past and existing labours of the Churches, as to point with encouragement to the value and necessity of a far greater extension of organised social aggressiveness on their part—in humble and prayerful reliance upon the all-seeing and all-present God, who will bless endeavours to gather souls to Him, and to snatch from destructive influences those for whom the Redeemer has died.

(Signed) LIGHTLY SIMPSON, *Chairman of the Committee.*
(Ex-Chairman of the Great Eastern Railway.)
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A. ANGUS CROLL (Colonel; late Sheriff of London.)
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